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Westmoreland Witness Blames CIA Analyst

Enemy Troop-Strength Debate Continues

By Eleanor Randolph
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NEW YORK, Oct. 31—Retired Army lieutenant general Daniel O. Graham today attributed much of the blame for a conflict about enemy troop-strength estimates in Vietnam on one participant in the 17-year numbers debate: former Central Intelligence Agency analyst Samuel A. Adams.

Adams, a codefendant in retired Army general William C. Westmoreland's \$120 million libel action against CBS, Inc., was a paid consultant for the network's 1982 documentary that accused the U.S. command in Vietnam of a conspiracy to suppress higher troop estimates at a crucial period in the war there.

According to CBS, because of this alleged conspiracy, the public, the media and President Lyndon B. Johnson were surprised when Vietnamese communists managed to wage a massive uprising that started Jan. 31, 1968, the Vietnamese Tet holiday.

The fact that enemy troops could attack virtually every major town and military facility in South Vietnam almost simultaneously on Tet startled the American public and became a turning point in support of the war, CBS argued.

In almost three weeks of testimony, men who worked with Westmoreland when he ran the U.S. war effort from 1964 to 1968 have tried to refute the CBS account.

One of the liveliest witnesses has been Graham, then a lieutenant colonel in charge of Army intelligence in Saigon. Now a promoter of so-called "Star Wars" defense systems through a nonprofit corporation called High Frontier, he has withstood relentless cross-examination by CBS lawyer David Boies.

At one point today, Boies pressed Graham on why, if Adams was the only CIA officer pushing for higher figures, the Army and the CIA would have had two meetings in 1967 to iron out differences in enemy-strength estimates.

"Yes, there wouldn't have been much of a conference if it were just Sam Adams and MACV [Military Assistance Command, Vietnam]. We would have rolled right over him," Graham said, drawing laughter from onlookers and the jury.

Graham then said that, although others agreed with some of Adams' argument that more enemy troops existed than were cited by MACV, "I never heard of anybody who agreed completely."

In the documentary, CBS quoted retired Navy Cmdr. James Meacham, a former intelligence officer, as saying Graham participated in the alleged conspiracy by "engineering a cover-up," as CBS interviewer Mike Wallace called it in the program.

Meacham was quoted in the broadcast as agreeing that Graham asked him to change the data base on the issue in MACV computers.

"We didn't like what Danny Graham proposed to do. We didn't want him to do it. At the end of the day, we lost the fight, and he did it," Meacham said in the documentary.

Graham testified this week, however, that he did not participate in a cover-up. He also sought to elaborate on his contention in a June 1981 interview with Wallace that Adams was the lone intelligence agent pushing CIA estimates of as many as 600,000 enemy troops while Army intelligence officers, including Graham, believed that there were fewer than 300,000.

In videotape of Graham's interview not used in the broadcast but shown Tuesday to the jury, he said: "I think there was really only one guy that . . . really disagreed" with lower enemy troop estimates by Army intelligence.

Wallace: "And who was that?"
Graham: "That was Sam Adams."

Later in the interview, Wallace returned to the issue, saying: "Sam Adams is a bugaboo with you."

Graham answered: "Sam Adams . . . he tried to get me court-martialed . . . I think he's, he's got a hangup . . . over people refusing to accept his numbers at the time of the Tet offensive . . ."

Adams, described by some fellow CIA analysts as "the very best . . . in the South Vietnam branch" when he worked at agency headquarters in Virginia, resigned from the CIA in May 1973.

Pursuing what he later called "probably the biggest scandal in American military history," Adams wrote a 1975 Harper's magazine article about the numbers dispute that became the basis for a congressional investigation and the CBS documentary, "The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception."

Special correspondent John Kennedy contributed to this report.